



**Transit Committee  
Minutes - Draft**

**Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, February 2, 2016**

**Attending:**

**Committee Members:** Adam Charnack, Chair; Valarie Macklin; Anthony Mitchell; Gary Ray; Lauren Noto; Bruce Emory; Calvin Allen; Charlton Owens; Edward Johnson; Tom Tomlin

**City/ART Staff:** Rose Christian; Yuri Koslen; Sean Spiller; Kelly Whitlock

**Community Members:** Tayika Anderson; Wayne Blackwell; Amy Cantrell; Sabrah n'haRaven; Dana Webb

**3:33 PM – Opening of meeting**

Adam opened the meeting.

**Review agenda** – Gary Ray motioned, Charlton seconded. Unanimous in favor.

**Approval of 5 January 2016 Minutes** – Valarie's name spelled incorrectly on list of committee members. Full list of community members who attended meeting not on 5 Jan. These changes will be made and resubmitted to Jaclyn Behoriam. Gary motioned to approve minutes with these changes, Bruce Emory seconded. Unanimous in favor.

**3:40 PM – Public Comment**

**Wayne Blackwell:** According to federal law, Wayne is entitled to a discounted bus pass because of his disabled veteran status. Says that supervisor (name given was Krista) made him bring doctor's note instead of handing him the pass with the documentation that the ART website specified. Walked to doctor to get note. When he came back to the station, he noticed that the note did not have a date on it. Wayne says the supervisor made him go back and get another note with a date.

**3:45 PM - TC Experiences Riding the Bus**

Charlton Owens mentioned the vandalism to the bus shelter by the CVS on Merrimon. Yuri said that the city has a graffiti team to remove the graffiti on the bus stop, and followed up on Charlton's comment last month by saying that they were investigating lighting the stop he discussed. Bruce Emory said that he has noticed that the bus often kneels too much and wastes time and there are outdated posters on the buses. Valarie related an experience with the N bus by Grove Park Inn with a driver being considerate about a customer that needed to make a connection. Tom related an experience with a S3 passenger unnecessarily pressing stops.

**3:51 PM New Business**

**Vote/Appointment of Vice Chair of TC:** Anthony Mitchell expressed interest. Tom put forward the motion to appoint Anthony to VC, Calvin seconded. Unanimous approval.

**Transit grant for Road Safety Audit of Patton Ave. – US DOT Mayors Challenge:** Corridor study from Patton downtown to Patton at Haywood. Sean is collecting the data and putting the study together for a transit road safety audit. Once data is collected, corridor will be narrowed. The grant

through the USDOT provides for professional staff to come look at the corridor through the lens of safety for public transit, not for a dollar amount. Yuri related that the intersection at Patton and New Leicester is one of the most dangerous in the state. Sean says the data is being finalized and they are targeting for late February to early March. Bruce asked how this related to NCDOT's road safety audits, and Yuri said that their audits are completely separate. This audit is specifically associated with transit. Yuri will check the audit to see if there is overlap between NCDOT's and this USDOT project. Consulting firm is VHB consulting.

**Discussion of better meeting times for TC:** Adam wants to strike balance between city staff's availability and attendees' availability. Ed proposed a quarterly or bi-annual meeting at a different time to boost participation. Valarie said that you have to consider the transit system's operation times when picking a new meeting time. Lauren said that the meeting time was inconvenient but seconded Ed's ideas. Ed said that perhaps sliding the meeting down an hour can get a chunk of the meeting and second public comment for people who get off work at 5 PM. Anthony asked if there was a feedback form on the website – Yuri said that [iride@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:iride@ashevillenc.gov) is pushed as a way to give feedback to the staff and that the chair's email is also on the committee web page for feedback as well. Calvin said that the email system was previously used for a prior complaint and that maybe emails can be read as part of a public comment period. Anthony said that promoting and making the feedback option via web would expand opportunity for more public comment. Tom mentioned that moving the meeting to the second Tuesday would allow TC to have the updated reports from the transit system. Adam will follow up with Yuri and come up with a few different times to propose for the next meeting. Ed related that many people are looking for feedback – perhaps an electronic trail so that people can trace the comment. Yuri mentioned he can work with TC for however they want to communicate with the riders about the meetings, and Rose said that she could help put up the meeting schedule. Tom and Charlton were interested in following up with Rose to make this happen.

**Adam added a few points:** Kelly Whitlock hired as the attorney to replace Martha. The passes TC members were given last meeting were keyed incorrectly, so new passes were in meeting packets today. Gary Ray mentioned a WLOS news piece on how the buses do not run late enough. Yuri mentioned he had not seen it, but reiterated that it was important and that it would be addressed in the next TMP. Tom's report from the driver meeting was that drivers discussed stops and bus routes for about an hour.

#### **4:21 PM Unfinished Business**

**TC Goals Progress Report – group discussion:** Last retreat was 2014. Adam mentioned that the committee should meet again to see if priorities have changed. Email Adam with any comments. Retreats are usually around 9:30-3:30 PM with food and a facilitator provided. Next meeting TC will discuss times and these ideas.

**MMTC Update:** Bruce: Last meeting was January 27th. Nothing major that directly affects transit: greenway, parking studies (Haywood Rd corridor, downtown one upcoming). Downtown parking study will include looking at a downtown transit shuttle – will be completed by consultant over the next 6 months. There is also a separate downtown shuttle being proposed by a private company between the downtown hotels. The consultant study will look at a more traditional shuttle. It may or may not be part of the regular transit system. As far as replacing the seat that Julie left on the MMTC, the position has been opened up to public applicants and will be finished this Thursday. TC is supposed to make recommendation to MMTC and then MMTC will make a recommendation to city council. We will need to operate outside of meeting times to make sure that MMTC has recommendation before its meeting by 2/24. Adam put forward a motion to discuss via email. Gary

seconded. Unanimously approved. Deadline to apply for MMTC is 2/4. Anyone is welcome to attend MMTC meetings.

#### **4:37 PM Staff Updates**

**Transit Management Contract/RFP Update:** Yuri says that the anticipated start date for the contract is still July 1, RFP forthcoming.

**Transit Master Plan (TMP) Update:** Yuri reiterated that grant funding was received through 5310. Solidifying contract with Land of Sky. Still in draft phase of RFQ. No exact time frame. Will try to have solidified timeline by next TC Meeting.

**Suspension policy update/ETA:** Just Economics, TC, City have worked together on guideline document. A few items need to be addressed before the document will be released, like weapon guidelines. Now have examples of suspension policies from other cities: would be for things like breaking the law. Working with City Attorney. Will try to have better ETA for next meeting.

**Carrying groceries/strollers update ETA:** Made headway on strollers: people can bring strollers onto the bus without breaking them down. Working on dimensions/types of grocery carts for the bus. Food Policy council has interest in grocery project. Gary related that WLOS had touched on the grocery issue in their report. Tom Tomlin asked about animals on the bus: service dogs are allowed, smaller cats and dogs allowed in carriers on a lap on the bus. Ed asked a question about rider responsibilities on the guidelines document: how are drivers supposed to assist passengers.

**Adam suspended the agenda to add “complaint system” under agenda item 8 to agenda item 6.** Rose provided an update on getting a better complaint box: box is in draft. Rose would also like to have people add what the system is doing right and can do better instead of just complaints. Over the next few months, First Transit will be finalizing documents for a federal audit and one of those documents is about the complaint process. Rose hopes that the project can be made a joint project to increase user friendliness for public but also increase usefulness for FTA. Aiming for documents to be finalized for audit by May.

**List of Projects – attached:** Yuri says the Federal Transit Administration is transitioning to a new software program which stalls grant writing because the reporting mechanism is closed. Work being done on RADTIP but Yuri has been involved more in Livingston Street project. About to release a contract to install pedestrian signals at three intersections. The Transit Station intersection is stalled out due to the grant software transition.

**ART monthly operating statistics – attached:** Yuri mentioned that W5 and S5 are starting to get integrated into the overall rank because they are newer routes. Calvin asked if the 60 new affordable apartments that are being built out by Swannanoa River Road could be connected to the transit system by S5. Yuri said that doing this would necessitate a significant public process, but the TMP process is about to begin and people can make comments through that to change the system. List of accidents per month was also added to the monthly operating statistics, per Tom’s request.

#### **4:54 PM - Public Comment:**

**Sabrah n’haRaven:** Seemingly young and healthy people may have invisible disabilities that may necessitate lowering the bus. Bus drivers know their regulars and can make that inference. Lowering the bus provides a service to these people so that they can ride in dignity.

**Amy Cantrell:** People's Voice on Transportation Equality. Wanted to clarify some concerns about the complaint system. Big issue is that overall system does not have complaint identifiers for tracking and is also not responsive. Complaints are made and disappear. Appreciates the work on the complaint system. Released State of the Transit study with UNC Asheville on evening service that can be viewed on JE website - <http://www.justeconomicswnc.org>.

### **PM Future Agenda Items**

**Advertising policy (spring):** Going to explore who can advertise on buses. Bruce and Julie Mayfield did research on policy.

### **PM Meeting Adjourned**

**Next Meeting: March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 - 3:30-5PM- 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room**